

amounts by individuals, and the story that unfolds is that that soft money was all about access. It was all about access to the White House; it was all about access to the Republican committee chairmen in the House, and the Republican committee chairmen in the Senate, and the leadership in the House and in the Senate. Letters went out and told people, if they gave \$10,000, they could have lunch with chairman of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Trade, and Consumer Protection, or the Committee on Labor, or the Committee on Ways and Means, or in the Senate one could have lunch or dinner or a private meeting, and for \$25,000 one could be in on strategy sessions.

The average American could not even dream of being in on one of those sessions. But that soft money then started to dictate, as we saw in the previous session, even before this election, lobbyists and powerful people sitting in the offices of the Republican leadership drafting legislation to weaken the Clean Air Act, to weaken the Clean Water Act, to weaken the health safety acts that protect our families and children against unhealthy food, to weaken the meat inspection act after people have died because of bad meat in the marketplace. But the lobbyists, they had access, because they gave \$10,000, they gave \$100,000. And the crescendo really came in campaign finance reform, or really about bad campaign practices, the crescendo came just about 1 month ago or 2 months ago when we did the Balanced Budget Tax Relief Act.

Members in this House voted on an act believing they were balancing the budget and providing tax relief. However, later we found out that the interests, the tobacco interests that gave the most money to the Republican Party, to the leadership, the individual Members of the Republican leadership, they were able to get a meeting that no other American could get. They were able to get a meeting where in the middle of the night, with no vote, no hearing, no discussion, and apparently, if we listen to the people, no authors, but an amendment got into that bill that provided \$50-, 5-0, \$50 billion in tax breaks for the tobacco companies that have been killing our citizens and lying about it for 50 years.

How did they do it? They did it because they gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to members of the leadership, to the Republican Party, to the Republican conventions, and the payoff day was the day that bill was passed.

Now, fortunately, because of Senator DURBIN over on the other side and Senator COLLINS and the gentlewoman from New York, Mrs. LOWEY, here, when they made us vote in the light of the day, it went away, because we shined democracy, we shined light, we shined the public perception. The press could see what was going on, and nobody would claim that amendment. But a few hundred thousand dollars got the amendment into the bill.

That is why we have been having procedural votes in this House, because we have to end this system that allows the people to sit in the galleries, but the special interests to sit in the office of the Speaker and the majority whip and design legislation; that allows the people to stand outside and petition us on the steps, but allows the special interests to sit down and have dinner and talk about how they can redesign the communications business and who gets access to this billion-dollar giveaway and that billion-dollar giveaway, and the networks will not be charged for using the public airways. That is what has to stop. That is what this week was about.

Finally, finally, after this week, we get some utterances from the other side that maybe they will allow a debate on campaign finance reform. They will not tell us when, they will not tell us how, and they are not even sure they will do it.

We deserve better, and the American people deserve better. The U.S. Senate today has started debate on campaign finance reform, and yet in the House we cannot even discuss it. We cannot even discuss it because of huge contributions to the Republican leadership.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds all Members not to refer to individual Senators or to characterize Senate action or inaction.

ENERGY POLICY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. SHIMKUS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, in 1992, Congress passed the Energy Policy Act which set Federal requirements on the use of alternative fuel vehicles such as ethanol-powered cars. This legislation required Federal, State, and city fleets to use vehicles that are cleaner and better for our environment. This act listed fuels and vehicle types that can be used by fleet managers to comply with this act.

Unfortunately, biodiesel was not one of the listed alternative fuels at the time because the industry was new, untested, unproven. However, today, that is not the case. As a result, I am introducing a bill, along with the gentlewoman from Missouri [Ms. MCCARTHY], to classify biodiesel as an alternative fuel under the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

Biodiesel is a renewable alternative fuel for diesel engines derived from soybeans. Once biodiesel is classified as an alternative fuel under this bill, it will be used immediately in conventional diesel engines with no engine modifications needed. A few examples of the type of vehicles using this B-20 mix are heavy-duty fleet vehicles such as city buses, boats, and trucks.

The diesel engines will use biodiesel in blends of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent petroleum diesel, which is the

most efficient, energy-efficient, and environmentally beneficial mix.

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The use of biodiesel will help to save on capital expenditures as fleets will be able to modify and improve their existing vehicles, as opposed to purchasing completely new fleets.

The production, sale, and use of biodiesel will create a new market for our farmers, and, in turn, boost our economy. Because it runs cleaner than regular diesel fuel, the use of biodiesel also means that fewer emissions, as an example, particulate matter, hydrocarbons, and carbon monoxide, are released to our environment.

By granting alternative fuel status to biodiesel this bill will promote economic development and energy security. Biodiesel means jobs and tax revenues for processing a greater portion of our domestic soybean oil in the United States.

The emerging biodiesel market offers a stable, long-term market for efficiently produced domestic soybeans that will directly benefit American farmers. The use of domestic biodiesel also improves national energy security by displacing imported energy, such as foreign oil.

It is important to note that this legislation does not create a tax break or a new Federal mandate. This bill will simply allow the biodiesel industry to compete in the alternative fuel market, giving fleet vehicle managers more flexibility in complying with the mandates required at the Federal level.

The production, sale, and use of biodiesel is good for the environment, good for family farmers, good for the economy, and good for our energy security. As a Congressman from one of the largest agricultural producer States in the United States, creating new markets for our family farmers, helping the economy, and keeping our air clean is very important to me.

In a time that we are looking for answers to environmental concerns, new markets for family farmers and a boost for the economy and energy security, biodiesel makes sense for everyone.

THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP SHOULD SCHEDULE DEBATE AND A VOTE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington, [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADAM SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to echo the comments of my colleagues and urge that this body bring up campaign finance reform and pass meaningful campaign finance reform in this session.

I think the biggest reason I want to see this happen is because of the lack of confidence that the public has in this body. There is a crisis in our democracy that I think too few people have noticed; that is, the majority of